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# **Submission Regarding the State Report on Vietnam's Implementation of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

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A report by NextGen for a Better Future

March 1, 2020

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NextGen for a Better Future (NextGen) is an association of children and youth aged 12 – 25 that nurtures the next generation of advocates among the diasporic Vietnamese community to work towards a better world. Many NextGen members have for the past four years participated in advocacy drives for human rights in Vietnam, including the successful efforts to free prisoner of conscience Tran Thi Nga; she and her two young children, along with their biological father, recently resettled to the United States.

This report is compiled through direct interviews with children still in Vietnam and those already resettled to the United States from Vietnam. We also received input from Vietnamese Women for Human Rights (VNWHR), whose members are the parents of many children highlighted in this report and also from the Independent Journalists Association of Vietnam (IJAVN), the co-founder of which has been in police detention since November 22, 2019 on the charges of “producing, possessing and spreading anti-state information and documents” (Article 117 of Vietnam’s Penal Code).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “*Journalist Pham Chi Dung detained on anti-state charges in Vietnam,*” Committee to Protect Journalists, November 22, 2019: <https://cpj.org/2019/11/journalist-pham-chi-dung-detained-on-anti-state-ch.php>

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# Introduction

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The government-sponsored deprivation of human rights, dehumanization, and humiliation of children runs rampant in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (hereafter Vietnam) despite its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Vietnam ratified in 1990.

Violations of children's human rights degrade the most fundamental principle of the Charter of United Nations: the human dignity and may negatively impact the welfare of future generations. Debasing the dignity of the most innocent, vulnerable and helpless members of the society is an act which the United Nations must address immediately for three reasons.

First, human rights violations can inflict more physical, mental, and economic damages to children than adults because the bodies and minds of children do not fully develop until the age of twenty-five. Second, the violations hinder the universal progress of societies to accomplish the first, third, tenth and sixteenth goals of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This achievement, once accomplished, would substantially improve billions of lives on earth<sup>2</sup>. Ultimately, violating the rights of children in Vietnam *undermines the future adults' abilities to overcome mankind's most significant challenges and societal issues, for example, war, poverty, or oppressive governance*.

This report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child documents the physical and mental violations of children's human rights, the indemnity of the abusers, and the government's failure to halt the dehumanization of children.

The evidence, which will be presented, comes from the research and first-hand interviews conducted by our organization, as well as reports and data from Vietnamese state media. We are grateful for having received assistance from the U.N. agencies, the Vietnamese and international human rights media, organizations, bloggers, defenders, and independent journalists, especially those who have dedicated their lives and sacrificed their safety and liberty to bring the issues to light.

We recommend the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to have the government of Vietnam to waste no time in, first, halting the violations of children's human

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

rights, second, allowing international monitoring mechanisms to inspect the Government's human rights practices, and third, scheduling meetings between the Government leaders with civil society advocates to work out solutions to the issues brought up in this report.

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# Legal Framework:

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On December 20, 1990, Vietnam ratified the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child, and since then, has adjusted the country's legal framework to fulfill the standard of the convention. Nevertheless, the Vietnamese Government has violated articles in the Convention and Vietnam's Constitution and Penal Code:

## **The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child:**

### **1. General Principles:**

- a. Article 3: 1. "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. 2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures. 3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision."
- b. Article 6. "States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child."

### **2. Family environment and alternative care:**

- a. Article 9. "A child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will unless this is deemed incompatible with the child's best interests. The child also has the right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both."
- b. Article 18. "For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children."
- c. Article 27. "States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development."

States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.”

### **3. Disability, Basic Health, and Welfare:**

- a. Article 24. “States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.”
- b. Article 31. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

### **4. Civil Rights, Freedom, and Violence Against Children**

- a. Article 37. “Protection against torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”
- b. Article 39. “Taking appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery after a traumatizing experience”

### **The Constitution of Vietnam (2013)**

- Article 37. “Children enjoy protection, care and education by the State, family and society and are allowed to participate in children’s affairs. Infringement, persecution, maltreatment, abandonment, abuse and exploitation of labour and other forms of violating children’s rights are strictly prohibited.”

### **Vietnam’s Penal Code (2015)**

- Article 67. 1b) “A convict who is a pregnant woman or having a child under 36 months of age may have the sentence deferred until the child reaches the age of 36 months”; 1c) “If the convict is the sole source of income in the family and his/her imprisonment causes his/her family to face extreme hardship, he/she may have the sentence deferred for up to 1 year.”
- Article 68. “A person who is serving an imprisonment sentence may have the sentence suspended in the cases specified in Clause 1 Article 67 hereof.”

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# Violations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## 1. V.D.

V.D. (born on February 23, 2016) is the daughter of a single mother and dissident blogger, Doan Thi Hong. Ms. Doan Thi Hong was active in defending land rights and the environment. On September 2nd, 2018, Ms. Hong was arrested at Dong Hung Thuan Market at around 7:00 AM and was taken to the police station at Tan Chanh Hiep Ward, District 12, Ho Chi Minh City. She was later transferred to the prison at 4 Phan Dang Luu Street. Ms. Hong's daughter, V.D., was only 30-months old when her mother was arrested. She has been cared for by her aunt, Ms. Doan Kim Khanh, Ms. Hong's sister in Binh Thuan Province.

V.D. was not allowed to visit her mother until a year after the latter's arrest on September 4, 2019. With an entire year completely and abruptly cut off from her mother's presence, V.D. was scared when she saw many prison guards surrounding her mother during her first and following visitations. She refused to talk and was resentful toward her mother for abandoning her for so long. V.D.'s aunt and current guardian, Ms. Doan Kim Khanh, reported that since her mother's arrest, V.D. has been suffering separation anxiety, emotional withdrawal, loss of sleep, lack of appetite, and depression. V.D. cries and throws tantrums at night and asks for her mother repeatedly.<sup>3</sup>

By detaining Ms. Doan Thi Hong when her daughter was only 30 months old, the Vietnamese government authorities did not follow Articles 67 and 68 in their own Vietnam's Penal Code which states that a convict who has a child under 36 months of age may have the sentence deferred until the child reaches the age of 36 months, and if the convict is the sole source of income in the family and his/her imprisonment causes his/her family to face extreme hardship, he/she may have the sentence deferred for up to 1 year<sup>4</sup>. Through this, the Vietnamese government authorities have also violated article 9 of the UNCRC.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Ms. Doan Kim Khanh by VNWHHR, February 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Articles 67 and 68, Criminal Code, No. 100/2015/QH13 of November 27, 2015, <https://wipolex.wipo.int/en/text/446021>

It should be noted that, by arresting Ms. Hong and placing her in temporary detention, because she had exercised her right to speak out in defense of victims of land grab and environmental injustice, the Government of Vietnam has violated international human rights standards as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).<sup>5</sup> Here, we would like to point out that such violation of human rights has had ramifications on the very young daughter of Ms. Hong.

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<sup>5</sup> Urgent Action: Activist Detained a Year Without Trial (Viet Nam: UA 117.19):  
<https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-activist-detained-a-year-without-trial-viet-nam-u-a-117-19/>

## 2. P.P. and T.P.

P.P.(born March 26, 2010) and T.P. (born November 27, 2012) are sons of Tran Thi Nga, a prominent human rights defender, a former prisoner of conscience and the subject of two communications by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.<sup>6</sup> Ms. Tran Thi Nga was arrested on January 21, 2017 at her home in Ha Nam Province for posting videos and writings online which the Government deemed as “propaganda against the state.” Her trial lasted only one day, and her family and supporters were prohibited from entering the courtroom. Ms. Nga was sentenced to nine years in prison and five years of house arrest.

As sons of a human rights defender, P.P. and T.P. had suffered from the mental and physical abuses by the Vietnamese authorities since a very young age. These children were beaten, detained, restricted from freedom of movement and at times were placed under siege and not allowed to go out to buy food or to play. There were multiple incidents where the local authorities poured fermented shrimp paste on P.P., T.P., and their mother, to which P.P. was allergic. One incident occurred when the family was walking back from a local temple, where they had paid respects to their deceased great grandmother, shrimp paste was splashed on them.<sup>7</sup> From these incidents, P.P. developed a severe rash that took a few years to cure.

P.P. and T.P. were subject to mental abuse from the Vietnamese government as well. Local police, uniformed and plainclothes officers, and state security agents have all taken part in an effort to harm both of these children because of their mother's influence. In one incident, the power to their house was cut off in the middle of the night and a snake mysteriously appeared in the dark house, terrifying the little boys. There were incidents where the local police put a padlock on the family's door and poured glue into the keyhole, making the padlock impossible to open without breaking the lock itself.

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<sup>6</sup> “Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its Eightieth session, 20–24 November 2017”, A/HRC/WGAD/2017/75, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session80/A\\_HRC\\_WGAD\\_2017\\_75\\_EN.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session80/A_HRC_WGAD_2017_75_EN.docx) and “Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders”, UA VNM 10/2018, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24171>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/tranthinga.love/videos/257136915139509/>

On May 25, 2014, while P.P. and T.P. were riding on the motorbike with their mother, they were viciously attacked with metal tube by 5 unidentified men, believed to be undercover police, who broke her arm and smashed her knee in front of the two frightened young children.<sup>8</sup>

P.P. 's and T.P.'s frequent encounter with violence by the authorities has resulted in immense emotional trauma and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). On the day of their mother's arrest, January 21, 2017, hundreds of police surrounded their house and blocked the entire area. Police burst into the house and forcefully apprehended their mother. T.P., who was only four years old, was so terrified that he crawled under the table and wet his pants. Soon afterwards, T.P. developed a stuttering problem and regularly began to wet his bed at night.

Deliberate prison transfers, a tactic frequently used by the Vietnamese authorities aiming to worsen prisoners' isolation by making it more difficult and costly for families to visit, negatively impacted the children. Ms. Tran Thi Nga was sentenced to nine years of imprisonment and placed in a prison thousands of miles away. Each visit trip took 3 days, meaning her children would have to take time off from school to visit her. Additionally, P.P. and T.P. were once not allowed to see their mother for several months due to the fact that Ms. Tran Thi Nga maintained her innocence and refused to admit any wrongdoing under physical and mental pressure by prison wardens.

Under international pressure, the Vietnamese Government released Ms. Tran Thi Nga from prison on January 10, 2020 and sent her into exile in the United States with her two children and the father of her two children. P.P. and T.P. continue to show signs of anxiety.

The Vietnamese government has violated Article 37 of the UNCRC by allowing violence to be directed at or to occur in the presence of young children. The Vietnamese government did not offer or provide any medical help to P.P. and T.P., violating Article 24 and Article 27 of the UNCRC. The Vietnamese government has also violated Article 9 by intentionally transferring their mother to a prison very far from the family. The Vietnamese government has also failed to adhere to Article 37 of the Constitution of Vietnam.

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<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2014/06/undercover-security-people-attacked-tran-thi-nga-prominent-vietnamese-blogger>

### 3. Children of Dong Tam Village

On January 9, 2020, a brutal police raid was conducted in the suburbs of Ha Noi, Vietnam's national capital. The raid targeted the residents of Dong Tam Village and resulted in the village leader's death and the arrests of 22 villagers who tried to defend some 59 hectares of agricultural land that have been passed down to them for generations from being taken over by the government of Ha Noi. According to witnesses, in the middle of the night thousands of police officers rushed into the villages and attacked the villagers with flash grenades, tear gas, and rubber and live bullets. During the raid, the elderly leader of the village, Mr. Le Dinh Kinh, was shot dead while asleep. Three police officers reportedly died during the raid. The police alleged that some villagers had set them on fire without presenting convincing evidence.

The police arrested 22 villagers, including two sons and an adult grandson of Mr. Kinh.<sup>9</sup> Many of people arrested have young children, who not only were traumatized by the violence but are now left without parental care.

For example, Mr. Bui Van Tien and Mrs. Tran Thi Phuong were arrested and charged with murder. They have three children born in 2007, 2013 and the youngest, K.B. (born on August 28, 2018), was only 18-month at the time of his parents' arrest. All three children are left in the care of their grandmother. Similarly, Mr. Nguyen Quoc Tien and Mrs. Dao Thi Thanh Kim, arrested on murder charge, have three children born in 2004, 2007, and 2013. Single mother Tran Thi La, arrested and charged with murder, left behind one child. Mr. Nguyen Van Quan, a single father of three children, was also arrested on murder charge.

The Vietnamese government authorities have violated Vietnam's Penal Code, Article 67 and Article 68, as well as Article 9 of the UNCRC by detaining the parents of children under 36 months old and rendering several young children parentless.

Another example is H.L., who was only 3 months old during the police raid in Dong Tam village. Both his father (Le Dinh Uy) and paternal grandfather (Le Dinh Cong) were arrested and charged with murder. His great grandfather (the village leader Le Dinh Kinh) was shot dead during the raid. H.L. was almost suffocated to death in his sleep when riot police



<sup>9</sup>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/01/viet-nam-arrests-social-media-crackdown-deadly-clashes-land/>

attacked the family home using guns, tear gas grenades, smoke grenades, and explosives despite young children present in the house. His mother, herself being suffocated, desperately cried out to let the police know there was a baby in the house. Only then did the police cease firing and dragged the mother and the baby outside. They did not provide any medical assistance to the baby.

The Vietnamese government authorities have violated Article 37 of the UNCRC by allowing violence to occur despite the presence of young children in the family home of H.L. Although the police eventually ceased fires and dragged H.L. and his mother outside, they failed to provide any medical assistance to H.L. which violates Article 39 of the UNCRC. The enclosed picture shows the bullet holes on the door of the house where baby H.L. and his family were attacked by the police the night of Jan 9, 2020.

## 4. Children in the Catholic neighborhood of Loc Hung Vegetables Garden

On January 4, 2019 at the Loc Hung neighborhood, children from more than a hundred families returned from school only to see the places where they enjoyed meals and watched TV with their families, where they showered, where they studied, and, importantly, where they called home being torn down to rubble<sup>10</sup>. By January 8, all 500 homes in this community had been destroyed. The authority of Ho Chi Minh City offered to compensate residents at only five percent of the market price.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the residents including many children remained without a home.



Most Loc Hung children now have to live in the tight space where their parents rented temporarily. The government did not allow the residents to come back to the rubble and retrieve their belongings. Therefore, the children lost their clothes, school materials, and even life-saving belongings. For example, in the case of the then one-year-old daughter of Mr. Huynh Anh Tu and Mrs. Pham Thanh Nghien, the entire family became homeless just a week after moving into their new home – the couple spent their ten-year savings on its construction. Their daughter has asthma and needs a home with electricity to operate a functioning nebulizer aspirator. However, because the government branded them as its political targets, the couple couldn't find a place with enough amenities to rent, thus putting their daughter's life at risk.

Another example, in the case of Mr. Pham Duy Quang, a resident of Loc Hung Vegetable Garden community, both he and his wife were arrested and detained during the raid. Their three children (K.P., L.P. and B.P.), all in kindergarten, were temporarily cared for by relatives while their parents were in police detention. Now living in a tiny rented apartment with their parents, the children no longer have the open space to play after school. They feel isolated and disconnected, having lost all their neighborhood friends.

Not only taking away the children's homes and parents, the government also violated freedom of thought, conscience, and expression. T.C., a child victim of the land grab currently attending Le Van Sy Primary School, was asked by the school board to read a government propaganda justifying the forced eviction in front of the entire school<sup>12</sup>. The "young man" bravely declined to

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<https://the88project.org/forced-eviction-in-catholic-community-of-loc-hung-leaves-hundreds-of-families-homeless-and-destitute-including-many-political-activists/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://en.mogi.vn> and

<https://the88project.org/brawls-broken-out-and-arrests-made-the-loc-hung-vegetable-garden-crisis-worse-ns/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/vn-loc-hung-boy-04102019163944.html>

take part in the propaganda, yet the event highlighted the dehumanizing nature of the land grab and the blatant violation of children's human rights, specifically the right of privacy.

The above examples show that State has violated Article 3, Article 6, Article 12, Article 13, Article 14, Article 27, and Article 39 of the UNCRC when it demolished the dwellings of children and paid little to no compensation to the parents, forcing them to live without a home.

## 5. D.N.

D.N. (born on November 6, 2008) is the son of Hoa Hoa Buddhist Nguyen Huu Tan, who was arbitrarily arrested by Vietnamese police on May 2, 2017. Less than 10 hours of being arrested, Tan was pronounced dead in the temporary detention center with a cut across his throat that ran almost from ear to ear; his larynx and carotid arteries severed and his neck bone exposed. The police notified Tan's wife and relatives that he had committed suicide with a letter opener and, as they contested such an explanation, threatened them with grave consequences.

Mr. Tan was the subject of Communication UA VNM 5/2017 by the Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.<sup>13</sup>

As the only child who was very attached to his father, D.N. was critically affected emotionally and mentally by the grisly killing of his father by the police. Not only did he tragically lose his father, but he also became the target of harassment and intimidation himself.

In the attempt to cover up the extrajudicial killing, the police exerted pressure on the victim's family and forced them to accept the police's conclusion that Mr. Tan committed suicide and not due to police's involvement. D.N. and his mother were followed everywhere they went.

Furthermore, D.N. saw the state television program run multiple stories defaming his father as a reactionary who committed anti-State activities; he also witnessed local authorities intimidating his mother and other relatives. Because of the television propaganda, D.N. was harassed and bullied at school by other students and neglected by his teachers who failed to take actions to protect D.N. from the harassment and bullying. D.N. was emotionally affected by the tragic loss of his father who was taken away by police in his presence. He could not understand what had happened and kept asking why his father left home for only one night and came home in a coffin with several visible injuries on his body. D.N. was terrified at the sight of the police and too afraid to go outside. Eventually, he had to drop out of school because he became too scared to go to school. Afterwards, D.N. became intensely attached to his mother and would not let her out of his sight, fearing that she too would leave him and never come back, just like his father did. D.N. and his mother, along with two of his uncles who were at imminent risk of being arrested and imprisoned, were able to leave Vietnam and resettle to the United States in January 2019, thanks to intervention by the US State department and a US member of Congress.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=23245>

The Vietnamese government authorities have violated Article 39 by allowing the police to exert pressure on D.N. and his family despite the fact that D.N. was emotionally confused and frightened by his father's traumatic death at that time. Furthermore, by closely tracking D.N. and his mother, the Vietnamese government authorities have violated Article 31, denying him a safe environment where D.N. can relax and rest.

## **6. The five children of Mrs. Tran Thi Hong**

The five children of Mrs. Tran Thi Hong, aged 6, 10, 12, 13, and 18 in 2016, were often threatened or physically assaulted by the police. In their communication dated May 27, 2016 several UN mandate holders raised their concern with the Vietnamese Government: “On 7 March 2016, while Mrs. Tran Thi Hong was away meeting officials of the U.S. Consulate General in Saigon to denounce the persecution suffered by her and her husband, the police raided her domicile and requested to verify household documents, in the presence of Mrs. Tran Thi Hong’s young children.”<sup>14</sup>

On March 30, 2016 Mrs. Tran Thi Hong was scheduled to meet with the U.S. delegation led by Ambassador At Large on International Religious Freedom David Saperstein to seek intervention for her husband, Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh who was serving 11-years prison sentence, and for their Lutheran House Church. As she rode her motorbike with her 10-years old son to the meeting place, police officers trailing her on their motorbikes pushed her motorbike to the curb. Mother and son were beaten and ordered to return home. Later in the day, Ambassador At Large Saperstein and U.S. State Department staff came to meet Hong at her home.

From April 14 to May 31, 2016 Mrs. Hong was repeatedly forcibly taken to the Office of the People’s Committee of Hoa Lu Ward to be interrogated, tortured and otherwise physically abused by officers of the Gia Lai Province. They wanted her to disclose her conversation with Ambassador At Large Saperstein and to sign a pre-written statement admitting to the crime of meeting with U.S. State Department officials without government approval. Despite the multiple injuries inflicted on her, she refused to comply and held a prolonged hunger strike in protest. The interrogation sessions only stopped after strong intervention by the U.S. State Department and U.N. Special Rapporteurs.

Throughout the month-and-a-half ordeal, her children were left alone at home when Mrs. Hong was being interrogated by the police at the office of the ward people’s committee. Her children had to witness their mother returning home from each “working session” with bruises on her face and her body, exhausted, and fearful. One morning, when the police came and took Mrs. Hong to yet another interrogation session, her oldest son, who was 18-years old at the time, was very worried about the poor condition his mother was in after having been repeatedly torture by the police. When he tried to beg the police to let go off his mother, they put him in a chokehold, beat him, took him away in the present of his frightened little brothers and sister. He was detained for the whole day at the police station and was not released until dark.

<sup>14</sup> Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, et al, May 27, 2016, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=3165>

In one incident, while Mrs. Hong and two of her children were on their way to visit her husband, Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, who was imprisoned a thousand miles away from their hometown, they were abducted by plainclothes agents and taken to an abandoned house in a remote area where Mrs. Hong and her young children were beaten, stripped, and verbally insulted. This episode severely traumatized the children.

The police set up multiple watch posts around the family home. They kept Mrs. Hong and her children under surveillance days and nights, following them everywhere they went, including when Mrs. Hong took her children to and from school. The children felt they were being treated like criminals and they were living in constant fear.<sup>15</sup>

Under mounting international pressure, the Government of Vietnam released Pastor Chinh on July 28, 2017 but sent him into exile in the United States with his wife and children. After two and a half years in the United States, these children continue to display flashbacks. A knock on the door at night would send them hiding under the table or bed. The teacher of one child has reported to Mrs. Hong that he was easily distracted and could not concentrate, symptoms often diagnosed for people with PTSD.



*Mrs. Tran Thi Hong aided by neighbors as she could not walk after being dumped in front of her home by the police, 14 April 2016*

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Mrs. Tran Thi Hong by VNWHR, February 2020



*Plainclothes police kept Mrs. Tran Thi Hong and her children under surveillance*

## 7. Propaganda in Education: An Anti-Religion View

The Government of Vietnam uses the national educational system to teach children at a young age to view religion, especially Christianity, and God as a hindrance to nationalism and the country's interest<sup>14</sup>. The state often requires students to take these courses which degrade religions. This propaganda demeans the children's religious faith and destabilizes the moral and psychological development of a child. It violates Article 27 of the Convention.

**\*\*\* The author of the following paragraph which describes his witness of the educational propaganda wishes to keep his or her identities confidential and NOT PUBLISHED TO THE PUBLIC\*\*\***

*“My name is BTN, currently a third-year student at the University of Maryland, College Park. I attended elementary and middle school in Vietnam from 2004 to 2012. I recalled taking a class in 7th grade called Citizen Education, Giáo Dục Công Dân, which every student in the country is required to take. The class was also known as Philosophy or Politics, Triết Học or Chính Trị, at upper level of education. I remembered one day the teacher of this Citizen Education class asked us to find one bad thing about each popular religion to criticize it. Then, she began to list these bad things that she knew and told us why religions are bad for society. My older friends at Church had a similar problem. Their teachers kept calling Jesus' names and degrading Him. Even though I sometimes objected to my teachers about the way they disrespected my beliefs, I felt tremendous anger, fear, and anxiety because the teachers could beat me up or shame me in front of the school. I believed that many other students also felt the same anger when their faith were degraded by the system. My dad, high school class of 1990, was threatened to be expelled multiple times for arguing over the same issue.”*

# Consequences of the Injustice for the Victims

	Irreversible Damage to Young Children	Hindrances on four of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals	Undermining Future Adults' Abilities to Fight Societal Issues
Parents Arrested and Murdered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Psychological scars</li> <li>- Deformity of the body or body parts or dysfunction</li> <li>- Instability in dwelling places &amp; loss of properties</li> <li>---Weakening one's abilities to study, work, &amp; rest</li> </ul>	<p><b>-Goal One &amp; Three:</b> End Poverty &amp; Good Health and Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>---Loss of the breadwinners/low incomes</li> <li>---Economic burden on relatives especially the elderly</li> <li>---Under-weight &amp; other health issues</li> </ul>	<p><b>-Poverty, Poor Health, Low Level of Education:</b> lack of financial and human capitals to address one's issue let alone helping others</p> <p><b>-Fear of the Oppressors:</b> witnessing the loss of loved ones or being assaulted at young age can cause the oppressed to accept the injustice to avoid the past experience</p> <p><b>-Economic Loss in Poor Communities:</b> no or little compensation in land grab cases means people can not use the compensated money to invest in the local market</p> <p><b>-Perpetuation of Injustice across Generations:</b> "injustice untouched and justice undone are the oppressor's paradises"</p>
Violence and Humiliation			
Land Grab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Psychological pressures: anger, fear, and anxiety</li> <li>---Decreasing learning abilities</li> <li>---Sparking conflicts between members of different religions</li> </ul>	<p><b>-Goal Ten and Sixteen:</b> Reduce Inequalities &amp; Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>---A loss of houses or pieces of farmland, the financial assets which can be invested for the children's future education</li> <li>---Poor and vulnerable children and families lost their homes and farms</li> <li>---Government and courts remained biased and favored the powerful</li> </ul>	
Propaganda in Education			

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## Recommendations to the U.N. Committee on The Rights of the Child

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We recommend that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child call on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to waste no time in implementing the following measures in order to comply with its obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):

- (1) Establish a mechanism for civil society advocates to report violations of children's rights;
- (2) Assign responsible agencies to investigate reported violations and respond to the author of each report;
- (3) Prosecute and punish government officials who violated children's rights or have command responsibility over such violations;
- (4) Ensure that the victimized children and their parents are duly compensated for all physical and mental damages;
- (5) Ensure that the victimized children and their family members have access to social, medical and mental health services; and
- (6) Suspend the detention or imprisonment of single parents, or of one parent in the case of both parents being detained or imprisoned, whose children are under 36-months old.